

# CULTURE MONSTER

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## 5 DAYS OUT

Highlights of the week ahead in arts, music and performance

### MUSIC/THEATER

#### "Blues in the Night"

The Wallis, Beverly Hills  
Opens 8 p.m. Wednesday  
Through May 20  
\$60

### THEATER

#### "School of Rock"

Hollywood Pantages  
Theatre, L.A.  
Opens 2 p.m. Thursday  
Through May 27  
\$35-\$145

### THEATER

#### "The Sisters Rosensweig"

South Coast Repertory,  
Costa Mesa  
Previews start 8 p.m.  
Saturday  
Through June 2, \$31-\$83

### ART

#### "In the Fields of Empty Days"

Los Angeles County  
Museum of Art  
Opens 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Sunday  
Through Sept. 9, \$16-\$25

### THEATER

#### "Hamilton"

Segerstrom Hall,  
Costa Mesa  
Opens 7:30 p.m. Tuesday  
Through May 27  
\$380.75-\$740.75

## ART REVIEW

# Power in the curve of a line

A punk hedonism grips the spare and intimate drawings of Kitty Brophy.

BY DAVID PAGEL

Back in the day, punks and hedonists did not rub shoulders.

Anger and outrage fanned the passions of the former, who could not stomach the hypocritical complacency of mainstream society. Pleasure and its unfettered indulgence drove the latter, who refused to put up with the prudery of polite society.

At the Los Feliz gallery Jenny's, 17 intensely intimate drawings by Kitty Brophy reveal that punks and hedonists have more in common than usually assumed: a love of freedom and the conviction that each of us must determine what that means, despite what is proscribed by the authorities or dictated by convention.

Most of Brophy's works on paper are no bigger than sketchbook pages. A few are the size of small posters or placards advertising underground events. Yet each packs a punch you feel in your gut.

Her palette is Spartan: nothing but midnight black, blinding white and blood red. The people in her pictures wear nothing at all, except, on occasion, a leather mask or a noose — or both.

Most are close-ups, with limbs extending past the paper's edges. Some depict individual figures in extreme — and extremely vulnerable — positions. Others show multiple figures, their torsos tangled together or stacked in stylized patterns. Genitals — often engorged — are anything but wallflowers.

The vulnerability of Brophy's subjects and the intimacy of their depiction never suggest that they are victims. Always powerful, self-possessed and cognizant of what they want, they are not to be messed with.

Their power is evident in the wickedly sensuous lines with which Brophy has drawn their contours, following the curves of thighs, cheeks, ribs and elbows with the same grace and decisiveness she brings to every inch of her compositions.

Think Egon Schiele stripped of the skewed power relations — and jaded world-weariness — of *fin de siècle* Vienna. Replacing anger with urgency, and treating pleasure with the complexity it is due, Brophy lays bare the reality of self-determination and the liberty at the heart of DIY rebellion. Punk hedonism and good old American ingenuity never looked better, nor ruffled feathers so effectively.

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### Kitty Brophy artwork

**Where:** Jenny's, 4220 Sunset Blvd., L.A.  
**When:** Through May 12; closed Sunday-Tuesday  
**Info:** (323) 741-8237, [www.jennys.us](http://www.jennys.us)



Photographs by KENT NISHIMURA Los Angeles Times

**PAINTER** June Edmonds drew inspiration from the presidential election for her work at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery.

# Visions of L.A.

Creative freedom runs high in new show at Barnsdall Art Park

BY MAKEDA EASTER

To Steven Wong, the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery's curator, contemporary art is a sign of the times and local art reflects the pulse of the city.

An upcoming exhibition at the gallery aims to highlight just that. The City of Los Angeles Individual Artist Fellowship exhibition is the culmination of an annual grant celebrating midcareer L.A. artists. Awarded by the city's Department of Cultural Affairs, the fellowship began in 1997 and provides each artist with \$10,000 for the creation of new work. This year the city selected 14 fellows in design and visual arts, literary arts and performing arts.

The exhibition opening Thursday at the municipal gallery showcases the work of 11 COLA fellows in visual artists. The show runs through June 24.

Although art funding continues to shrink, the grant is one of few in the city by a public entity.

"L.A. is one of the few cities that really awards artists," said Isabelle Lutterodt, director of the gallery and Barnsdall Art Park, which are presenting the exhibition with the DCA. "It's not conditional. They can do whatever they want with this funding."

For Wong, the exhibition is a broad look at trends in contemporary art and a glimpse into the experiences of those living in L.A. Wong said the fellows are also a diverse representation of the city.

Given creative freedom and about nine months to create work, several artists chose to explore the country's turbulent political climate.

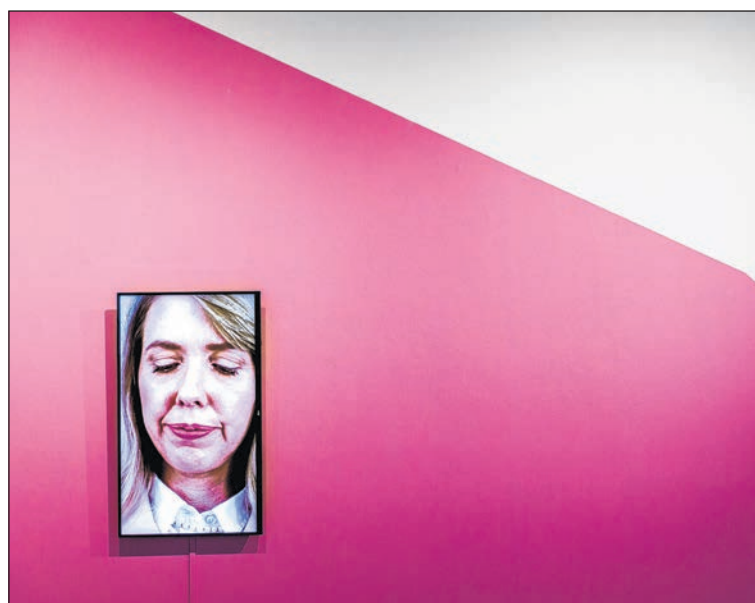
"We're in a very unusual, high anxiety time where people are searching for ways to process and understand what's happening around us," Lutterodt said. "The people on the front lines of responding are artists."

Painter June Edmonds' work focuses on abstract, patterned paintings influenced by Adinkra symbols from Ghana. The funding gave Edmonds the resources to move into a studio at Angels Gate Cultural Center in San Pedro to create the large-scale pieces.

Inspired by the presidential election, her art took a political turn, with one piece centered on the American flag. The work — which interprets the flag with various skin tones — examines what the flag symbolizes for people of color and women in the U.S.



"TUMBLR Dreams" by Guillermo Bert focuses on immigrants.



A VIDEO installation by Michele O'Marah takes on misogyny.

"I'm responding to ownership of the flag and how it's appropriated by white supremacist ideas," Edmonds said, "and reclaiming it."

The work was a departure from her typical use of bright primary colors.

"When she told me she was thinking about doing something that was inspired by the election ... I was a little skeptical," Wong said. "But it's the time that we're in. It's great to have a city space to have that engagement and have that dialogue."

Other artists are addressing history — the erasure, the re-imagining and the reclaiming of it.

Cassils, a transgender perform-

ance artist, used the grant to bring attention to the history of Barnsdall park, once a gay cruising site.

Cassils developed a blackout room that relies on touch, smell and hearing to re-create the Barnsdall olive groves in darkness. The work also pays homage to the park's founder, heiress Aline Barnsdall, as a radical feminist.

Multimedia artist Sandra de la Loza said her work was inspired by the role of transportation infrastructure in shaping the physical and demographic contours of L.A.

To create her work "To Oblivion," De la Loza dug deeply into the history of L.A.'s rail infrastructure, the 1903 Pacific Electric Railway

### COLA Fellowships Exhibition

**Where:** Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, Barnsdall Art Park, 4800 Hollywood Blvd., L.A.

**When:** Thursdays-Sundays, through June 24

**Who:** Fellows are David Hullfish Bailey, Guillermo Bert, Terry Braunstein, Cassils, Sandra de la Loza, Michelle Dizon, Tim Durfee, June Edmonds, d. Sabela Grimes, Peter J. Harris, Michele O'Marah, Julie Shafer, Doris Sung, Kristina Wong (not all are in the exhibition)

**Admission:** Free

**Info:** (323) 644-6269, [www.lamag.org](http://www.lamag.org)

strike by Mexican laborers and a faith healer who was exiled from Mexico and settled in L.A. The installation, which includes a remade bicycle float, kaleidoscope video footage and redacted poems made from old L.A. Times, speaks to the erasure of history.

For De la Loza, the fellowship let her tackle a research question she's had for years.

"It's very hard to dedicate 100% of your life to art practices," she said. The fellowship "helped me claim the time, space and also have the resources. It helped me take a leap."

Other themes at the exhibition include a mixed media installation by Guillermo Bert, which features video testimonies of L.A. immigrants projected onto suspended tumbleweeds; multiple slide projections and audio narratives exploring what it means to be a second-generation Filipina by looking to the past, present and future by artist Michelle Dizon; and a video installation that critiques systemic patriarchy and misogyny by Michele O'Marah.

Both Lutterodt and Wong hope visitors use the exhibition to reflect on current affairs and connect with the diversity of experiences within L.A.

"We don't have enough time off-line to really think and communicate with each other," Lutterodt said. "Going to see an exhibition is a time for people to ... slow down and really think about what an artist is tackling."

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